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CHINESE FARMERS PROTEST EXPANSION OF STATE FARMS

[Summary: This report describes the expansion of state farms in Honan and Chekiang provinces and points out mistakes made in the expansion that have aroused opposition among the farmers.]

Cadres in certain subdivisions in the provinces, ch'us, and hsiens have been so eager to promote state farms that they have engaged in blind expansion and disputes with the people over land. This has caused farmers near state farms to become dissatisfied and has hindered the establishment of the close relationship which should exist between state farms and the farming masses. Moreover, it has hindered crop production.

Last spring, Hsia-i Hsien State Farm in Honan Province sent 12 cadres to each hsiang chief with enthusiastic propaganda about mutual land exchange between state farms and individual farmers. This land transfer involved 5 ch'us and more than 2,000 farm families. The Lo-yang Special Administrative District State Farm had to transfer land involving 14 hsiang. This situation led to local mass dissatisfaction and opposition. The Nan-yang Special Administrative District forced farmers to exchange land and compelled mass removal of households. After blindly expanding cultivated areas, Wei-shih Hsien had more than 2,000 mou of fields without anyone to care for them.

During March and April of 1953, I-wu Hsien State Farm in Chekiang Province put into state farms more than 129 mou of land around the hsiang and ts'un which had been reserved at the time of the land reform, and arranged with farmers to take other land in return for the farmers' land in the vicinity of the state farm. This land transfer involved 8 hsiang and chen (market towns), 25 ts'un, and 195 farm families. The land for which property rights had to be shifted totaled 320 mou of irrigated land, and 50 mou of nonirrigated land.

Farmer Sung Chao-kuei, of Mao-tien Ts'un, had more than one mou of good fields near the town but was ordered to exchange his good fields for pond bottom land 2 li from his home. Farmer Lou Tsung-yao had one field of good land

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which could yield 800 catties of rice per mou, but after the exchange he had two fields of poor land which could yield only 600 catties of rice. Having suffered from the transfer and finding no relief for his problem he said, "The only suitable thing during land reform is not to split up the land."

Farmers near the state farms who had not yet suffered from the land transfer, lost interest in production and ceased applying fertilizer because of fear of dispossession. There were people who feared land transfer so much they cut down and carried off trees which were growing on the dykes between fields. Some farmers were opposed to state farms, and were neither willing to enter the state farms nor to help them.

The state farms have continued to expand their areas of cultivation, although the increased expansion did not arise from an actual need. The state farms did not and could not use suitably the expanded area.

This condition was the result of several important factors. Leadership cadres of the state farms, together with their leadership units, failed to understand the course that the state farms were embarking upon at that time and failed to carry out their work conscientiously. Moreover, they disregarded the party's and people's government policies in regard to agricultural production and rural activities. Since they did not give thoughtful attention to actual needs in doing a good job on the farms and approached the situation in an unrealistic manner, they followed the rule of "the bigger the better," blindly expanding the areas under cultivation by state farms and not getting good results.

In 1952, I-wu Hsien State Farm in Chekiang had over 100 mou of irrigated land and nearly 60 mou of nonirrigated land which is quite large for a single farm. This farm's rice production was much lower than that of local farmers in 1952, but in 1953 they blindly expanded the farm by more than 100 mou of cultivated land. Because 80 percent of the rice plants were allowed to rot, production still was not nearly as high as other local area production. Farmers sarcastically said, "State farm experiments are good...at letting plants rot." This condition is not only very far from the original intention of the expansion program, but also has created a gap between the state farms and the masses which must be corrected.

The party leadership in Honan and Chekiang provinces has begun to take notice of these conditions and to correct them. The Honan Provincial Committee of the Communist Party, during the last 10 days of April 1953, issued directives to all the local committees to help every cadre of every ch'u and hsien farm recognize the seriousness of the mistake of blind expansion of state farms and to make immediate improvements in the situation.

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